

Amendments to the drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to FIGS. 3 and 10. In FIG. 3, the phrase "ADDRESS FOR MDN" has been replaced by "RETURN ADDRESS FOR MDN," and the phrase "MAIL IDENTIFICATION" has been deleted. In FIG. 10, the figure is now labeled as "PRIOR ART." No new matter is added.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-16, and 18-20 are pending in the application. Claims 5, 6, 11, 12, 18, and 19 have been amended to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 101, but are not amended substantively. Claim 14 has been amended to overcome the claim objection, but is not amended substantively. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed.

The drawings were objected to because the following reference characters allegedly were not mentioned in the specification: (a) HEADER, (c) ATTACHMENT, REQUEST FOR MDN, ADDRESS FOR MDN, MAIL IDENTIFICATION (FIG. 3), and reference #S24 (FIG. 8). Regarding (a) HEADER, the specification has been amended at page 23, line 8 to make reference to "(a) HEADER" in FIG. 3. Regarding (c) ATTACHMENT, the specification has been amended on page 35, line 1 to make reference to "(c) ATTACHMENT" in FIG. 3. Regarding "REQUEST FOR MDN," the specification has been amended on page 21, line 24 to make reference to "REQUEST FOR MDN" in FIG. 3. Regarding "ADDRESS FOR MDN," FIG. 3 has been amended to replace "ADDRESS FOR MDN" with "RETURN ADDRESS FOR MDN," as described on page 24, lines 5-12 of the specification. Regarding "MAIL IDENTIFICATION," this phrase has been deleted from FIG. 3. Regarding reference character S24, the specification has been amended on page 31, line 9 to add reference number S24. Further, FIG. 10 has been labeled as "PRIOR ART." It is believed that all of the drawing objections have been addressed and overcome.

The title was objected to as not being descriptive. A new title is provided that is descriptive of the claimed invention. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 10, and 17 were objected to as being substantial duplicates of claims 1, 7, and 13, respectively. Claims 4, 10, and 17 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claim 14 was objected to because of the phrase "a network," which has been replaced by "the network." Withdrawal of the claim objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 5, 6, 11, 12, and 18-20 were rejected under 35 USC 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. On page 7 of the Office Action of 04/03/2008, the Examiner recommended replacing "computer readable medium" with "tangible computer readable medium" in claims 5, 6, 11, 12, and 18-20. On page 8 of the Office Action of 04/03/2008, the Examiner recommended replacing "program" with "program embodied in a computer-readable medium" in claims 5, 11, and 18. The claims have been amended in the manner recommended by the Examiner, and thus the rejections should be overcome.

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e)/102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2003/0187937 to Yao et al. ("Yao"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding the rejection of independent claim 7 (and the other independent claims) over Yao, the Yao reference does not teach or suggest at least "data identifying means for determining whether data to be received over the network is response data to the response request," and "receipt control means for controlling the transmission/receipt means so as to preferentially receive data identified as the response data by the data identifying means over other data."

Yao is directed to an email client which receives and handles incoming email messages, where attribute rules 32 stored in a database 18 are applied to incoming email messages in order to assess their "importance" based on various characteristics, and each email message is assigned an importance rating (see, e.g., paragraphs 0019-0021 of Yao).

In contrast, according to the Applicants' claimed invention, a response request is embedded in data to be transmitted to a receiving-end machine, which response request requests the receiving-end machine to send back a response (response request embedding means), determines whether data to be received over the network is data that responds to the response request (data identifying means), and preferentially receives data identified as the response data over other data (receipt control means).

Yao does not teach or suggest determining whether data received over a network is response data to a "response request," e.g., a disposition verification response based on the MDN (Message Disposition Notification) function. In particular, Yao does not identify whether an incoming email message is a "response request," as distinguished from other email messages. Thus, Yao also does not teach or suggest controlling a transmission/receipt means to give preferential treatment to response data over other data (i.e., ordinary incoming email messages).

It is believed that the claims are in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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